

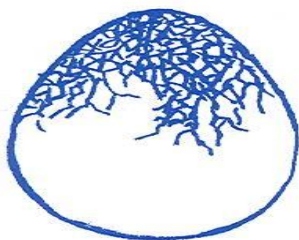
# THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY CRAFT BOOK



EGGSHELL MOSAICS  
PERSONAL ORNAMENTS  
AFTERWORDS



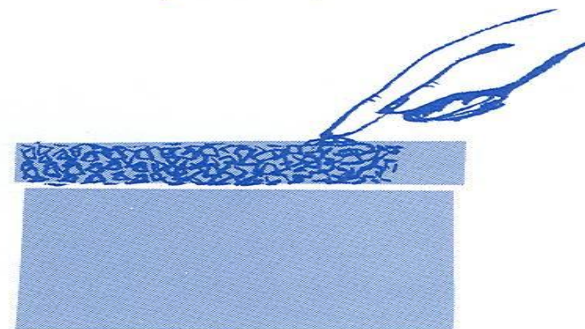
Burton Everist



One last step on your eggshells: remove the light membrane. Peel only what comes off easily, but try to avoid little edges sticking out around the shell pieces. On the other hand, don't be too worried about the membrane, since it will usually be the side glued down to the box. (If you dye the eggs with the transparency pens later, the membrane if it is glued face-up, dyes more deeply. On later projects you may prefer that method for variety.)

## ① PLAIN EGGSHELLS FIRST...

This first project will be plain eggshells, glued on to any small box. Pour a little white glue into a small, stable container, and brush it onto the inside of any small-sized eggshell fragment. Press the fragment to the box. It will crack further — that's just fine! Continue this until every side of the box (except the bottom!) is covered with your shell pieces. You may wish to lacquer the finished product (fingernail polish works fine). For a large box, use clear acrylic.



If you feel ambitious, you might choose not to lacquer your finished box, but to color a design on the shells, using permanent felt-tip transparency pens (you could use ordinary permanent felt-tip markers, but they will mask the eggshell texture slightly). If you wish to color a design, let the shapes of the shells guide you: don't color half of a piece one color and the other half another color. Let your design be suggested by the "breaks" of the shells.

Now you may want to do more boxes, starting with a design theme in mind. I chose to use undyed white shells with my "picture" already in my head.



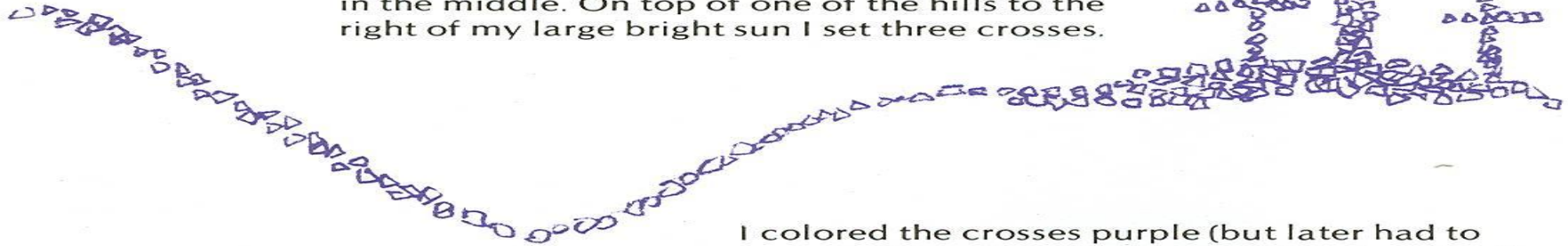
I picked an Easter theme: a bold sun in a bright blue sky above the hills upon which stand three empty crosses.



I began with the sun: basically round, with short, sharp rays of a second color. The shells were applied, glued, and later colored with the pen.

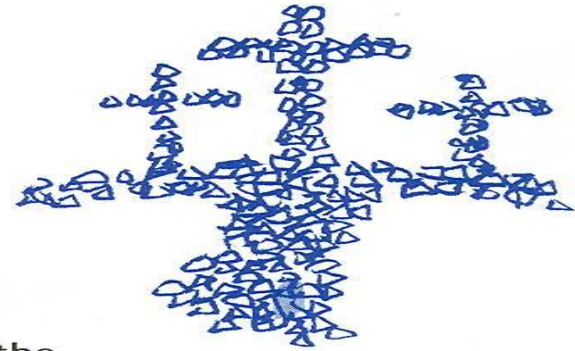


Then I worked on the slope of the hills, fitting slightly curved pieces down one side of the top of the box and then down the other, to meet in the middle. On top of one of the hills to the right of my large bright sun I set three crosses.



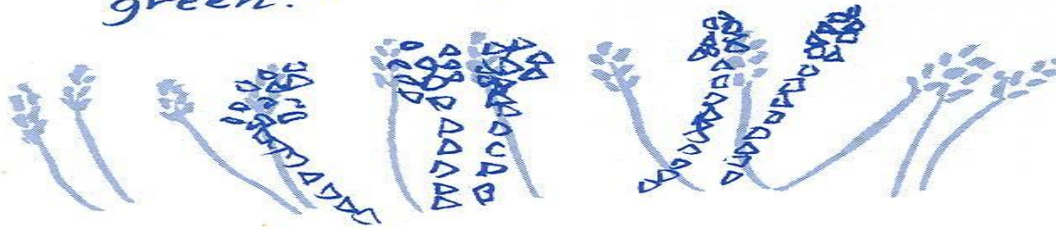
I colored the crosses purple (but later had to remove them, piece by piece with a stencil knife and recolor them bright orange). Then, I filled in the rest of the sky and the earth, coloring the sky deep blue (with some pieces left white for clouds) and the earth a rich brown. Later I covered the rest of the box with shells and decided to continue the blue and brown theme.

The deep blue overwhelmed my purple crosses, and I redid them, dyeing the new shell pieces bright orange! I also decided that one little spot on the hill below the cross should be bright yellow — a glimpse of the open tomb. And, I broke my own "rule", running a thin line of green up a hairline crack on the piece I had dyed yellow. It suggested to me the new life that Christ gave us, the power of the Resurrection to give hope to the drab brown landscape of many lives.



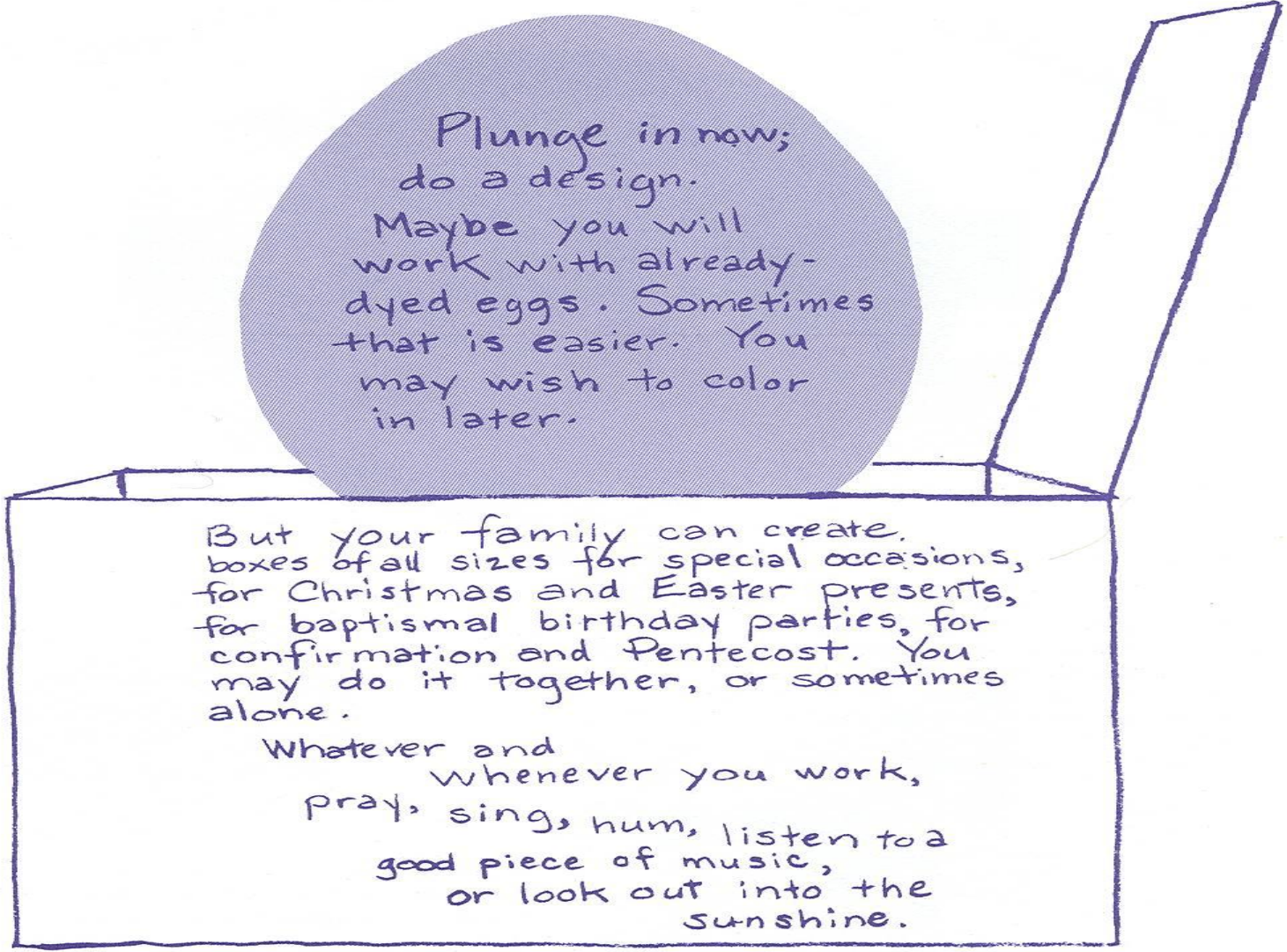
Running through my head while I think of the design: *Love is Come Again*, a splendid Easter Carol from the OXFORD BOOK OF CAROLS:

*"Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth  
green."*



Maybe that carol was running in my mind all the while I did the design! It would be a good hymn to sing while working!

Remember, most boxes will be small designs. They are made for desk-tops or devotional centers. My design would be different as a paper mosaic on a larger scale, even with the same theme.



Plunge in now;  
do a design.

Maybe you will  
work with already-  
died eggs. Sometimes  
that is easier. You  
may wish to color  
in later.

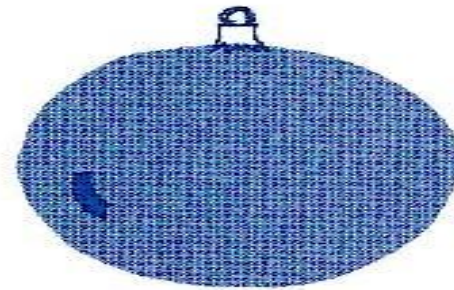
But your family can create  
boxes of all sizes for special occasions,  
for Christmas and Easter presents,  
for baptismal birthday parties, for  
confirmation and Pentecost. You  
may do it together, or sometimes  
alone.

Whatever and  
whenever you work,  
pray, sing, hum, listen to a  
good piece of music,  
or look out into the  
sunshine.

# PERSONALIZED CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENTS

The heart of the Good News of Jesus Christ is that He came for me. Or, as C. S. Lewis put it in Perelandra, "He came for each one." This simple family craft is another good way of making clear that the gift of Christ is a gift for each person.

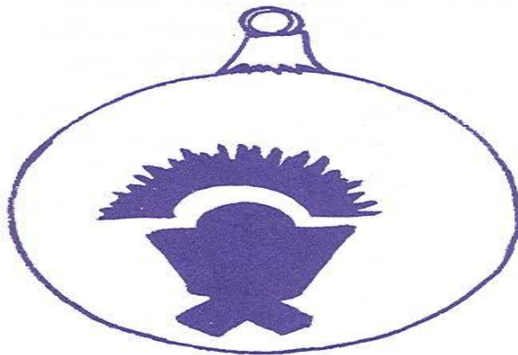
Take one shiny, single-colored, large (two-inch or three-inch) Christmas tree ball, a paint brush, an assortment of acrylic paints (although white is preferred); mix with ideas gained from old Christmas cards or Christmas church bulletins, and just a little imagination and patience; and your family can create personal Christmas tree ornaments for each other and for special folks you know. (It's also a good idea to have some old clean rag).



It takes a little practice, but just begin lettering someone's name on one side of the ornament. (Here is an opportunity to pray for that person as you create for them.) All except the smallest children can work at this, because the work doesn't have to be "professional."

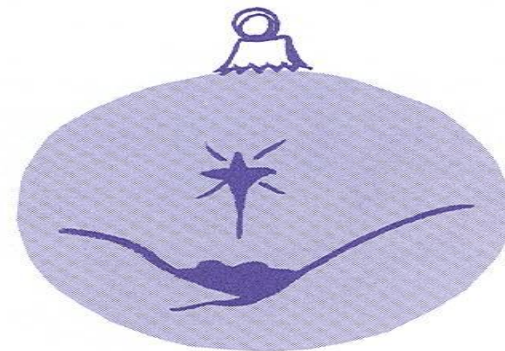
It helps if you *don't* try to do "straight-across" lettering. Borrow from the artists who have fun with jumbled lines that lend a feeling of joyful dance to the work.

(Usually you will need only the first name, unless your family gathers intergenerationally.)



Next, you may want to draw a Christmas symbol on the opposite side of the ornament. Or, if you are really ambitious, you might work your design around the entire ball, encompassing the name. Here, you will want to think of the heart of the Christmas story, and you might well reflect prayerfully on what symbol would be the best one for the person who will receive your gift.

If you don't like your efforts, clean the ornament off with a rag soaked in the appropriate solvent, and begin all over again! But, once more, do not worry over an occasional small smudge or a line that is too long or too short. Begin simply, and do fancier work after you have had some practice.



For my ornament, I've chosen a shiny deep blue (my favorite color), and I'm making it for my wife, Norma. Since capital letters are easier to draw, I've danced her name across the entire ornament, with just a little space left so the name does not run into itself! I'm using a light blue paint.



I want Norma to remember (she already knows) that the Lord Jesus has made His home within her, so into the "O" of her name, glistening brightly, I'm sketching a simple manger "x" in white. But the light from the manger is radiating well beyond her "O", spreading out from her name to lighten others.

Norma's ornament could be as simple as that, but there are more gifts I want to share. Norma is a Deaconess, and the symbol of her community is the towel and the basin, images of waitresses and servants. She is also an ordained minister: the cup and the communion plate are good symbols here. All of these also fit the meaning of Christmas.





I think I will underscore her name with the basin, and center a communion cup between the beginning and end of her name. For me, it means that Christ came to be her servant, supporting her in her ministry. It also announces that the beginning and end of her life are wrapped up in sharing her Christmas Lord with others.

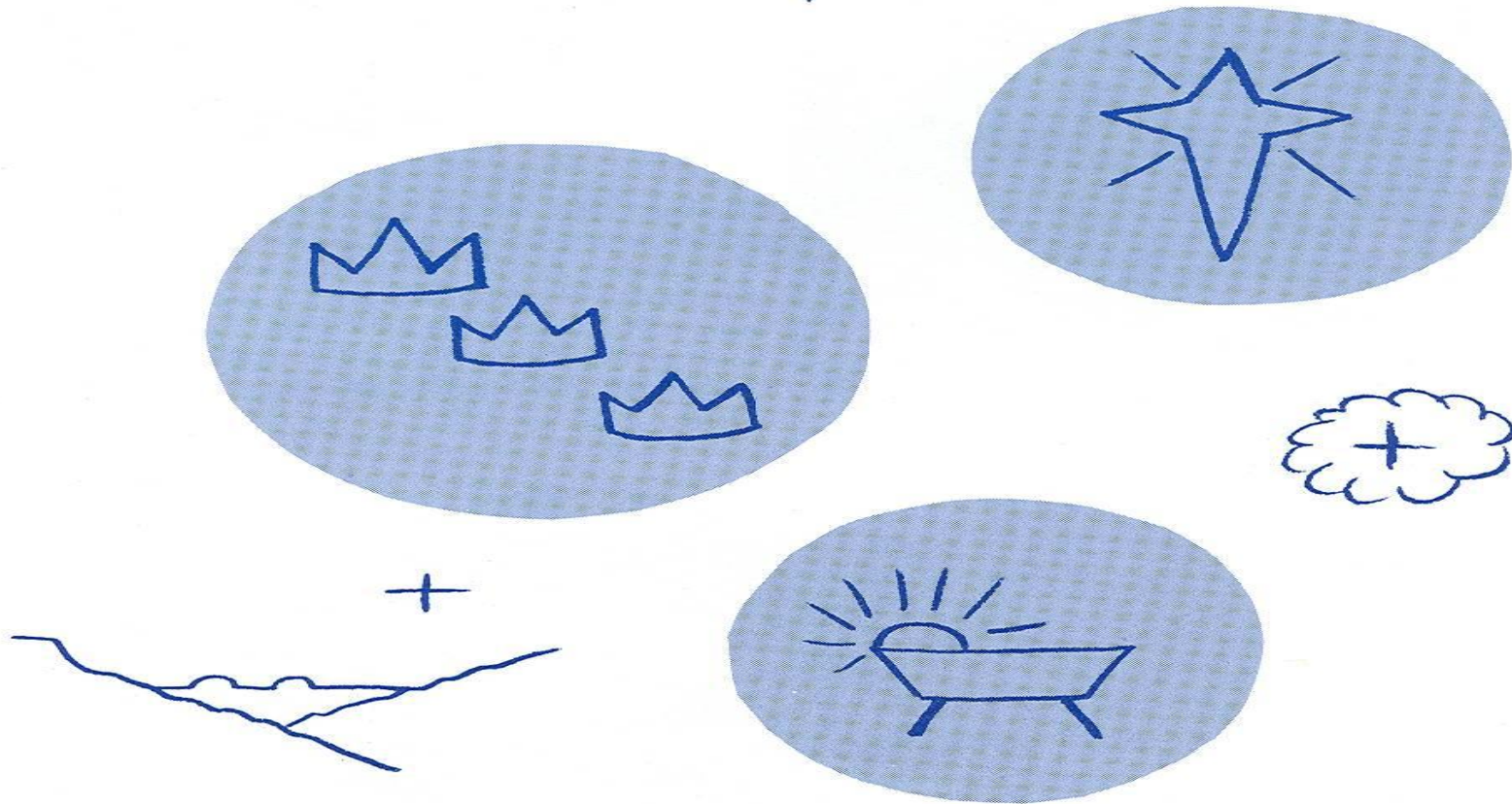


That turned out to be a bit more complicated an ornament than the average, but sometimes it gets that way. Artists might not care to explain the symbols, but for me it is a way of sharing the deepest meanings of Christmas. It is part of the action of family craft: the praying, the thinking, the doing, the giving, the sharing meaning.



Naturally you won't want to limit your creating to family members. There are neighbors, friends, teachers, co-workers, church workers, guests, hosts, and other very special people for whom this craft will be a gift they will treasure, one that will hang on their tree each year, reminding them of you, recalling to them the Christmas Lord.

Some Christmas symbols:

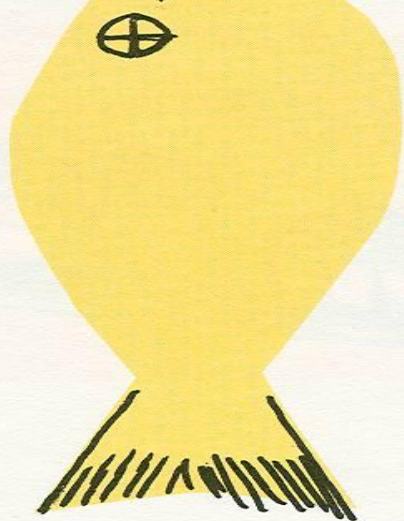


## A NOT-SO-FINAL WORD...

Sharing these crafts through this book has been an enjoyable craft for me. I hope that it has been worthwhile for you, too. Our family doesn't do crafts all the time — not even on a regular basis. But when we do, we find the time refreshing. We are pleased with what we create, and we like giving our creations away for others to enjoy.

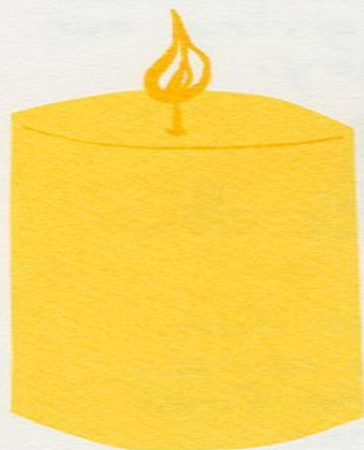
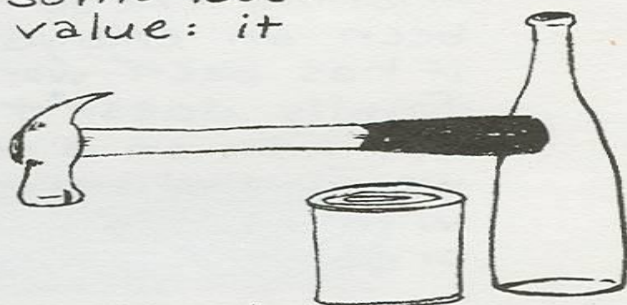


But it is the doing together that is the great fun. We offer suggestions and ask each other for advice. We gently criticize (keeping in mind that the final product is not our major concern), and we mostly encourage each other.



Our conversations share the faith as we seek to visualize it in pictures and symbols. Many questions get asked; some get answered, some are left for prayerful thought. Casual conversation in the relaxed setting of working on a project has a way of opening doors to discuss concerns the family shares.

Of course, it takes time. Even with a portable craft center and all the tools and materials at hand, the doing of the craft takes time. Some crafts take more time, some less. But this time is packed with value: it is worship time, family time, creative time, packed into one.



These crafts are just a few that can be done in families. All of them can be done by anyone, without any Christian intention. Most of them are adapted from ordinary craft books, old art techniques, and contemporary magazine articles. Your family can take any craft or art technique and adapt it for yourself.

I would encourage you to give careful attention to the crafts and art activities your children bring home from school. Let them teach their learning to the rest of the family. Use it to reflect the faith your family holds, and to worship the Lord as you do.



REMEMBER,

if your family develops additional family craft activities, I'd like to know about them. Send me a note, in care of Morehouse Barlow. We might even make it into a second book (with your permission, of course!). And I'm always looking for others ideas to share at the Christian Family Craft workshops that I do around the country.



May the Lord bless your family,  
may you grow together in faith and  
service through Jesus Christ by the  
guidance of the Spirit of the Lord!  
~BE

"Let Thy work appear unto Thy  
servants, and Thy glory unto their  
children.

And let the beauty of  
the Lord our GOD be upon us: and establish  
Thou the work of our hands upon us;  
yea, the work of our hands,  
establish Thou it."

- Psalm 90:16-17



